

Education Committee

SUPPORT: Executive Budget Charter School Per Pupil Increase

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

Allow me to take this opportunity to introduce myself and my family. My name is Ana Valencia, I reside in Bridgeport with my husband and two children. My children attend Multicultural Magnet School. I am a big proponent of choice in education, since having this choice in Bridgeport allows both my kids to attend a quality school. I support all choice schools, magnet, charter and others.

I'd like to tell you about myself, but first I want to ensure I ask for your support in this legislative session to end inequality in educational funding. I ask that you fight for funding based on the students' needs- not their zip code or their socio-economic background and the expansion of quality schools like Stamford Excellence and Danbury Prospect. Minority children are at the center of your decision making!

First, I arrived in the USA at the age of 9 years old without speaking any English. I was always a good student and eager to learn. The first few months were very hard because my first teacher did not speak any Spanish. I endured many obstacles such as the language barrier, discrimination and lack of mentors or leaders until my last years of high school. My English teacher and my counselor gave me hope and guidance and even helped me get signed up to apply for a special scholarship. I at that point was ready to finish high school so I could start working to help my family with expenses. But my counselor convinced me that I could be the first in my family to graduate high school and become a first generation college graduate.

I am now a professional and strive to inculcate the importance of education in my children. Education to me is the best inheritance we all can leave for our children.

I fight for great schools in our community because they yield educated, strong, capable citizens and as a byproduct safer communities. We need equitable funding because our school system needs to explore and develop new ways of keeping our children engaged and interested in learning. We need mentoring programs that can help guide and inspire our children to reach their goals- that takes funding which we lack in our city.

Covid 19 has made us feel unsafe and uncertain, the anxiety remains high outside as well as inside the home. We have overcome that and have come to the conclusion that all things happen for a reason and we are blessed to be home together. We remain optimistic because we are stronger in a time of challenge. But I can not do this alone, I need those that represent me to make our children a priority- there is no room for negotiation when it comes to the future of our children.

I firmly believe that no elected official would want to have to gamble with their children's education. Families in my community which remain marginalized and under resourced should not be put in that difficult situation either.

I look forward to hearing from you and to working together to end inequity in education in our great State of Connecticut.

**I stand in support of SB 948, SB 949 and SB 886.**

Best regards,

Ana Valencia and Family



